

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 DHA-02 EUR-12 CU-02 AID-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04
SIL-01 SCS-03 /091 W

----- 010687 /46

R 151115Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5418
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 2247

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SF, PINT, PINS
SUBJECT: PERCY QOBOZA DISCUSSES INTERROGATION

1. CONGENOFF SPOKE WITH QOBOZA (EDITOR, WORLD NEWSPAPER) ABOUT VISIT OF SECURITY POLICE AND SUBSEQUENT INTERROGATION. QOBOZA WELL TREATED (WITHIN THE SA SECURITY POLICE CONTEXT) BUT FEELS HE WOULD STILL BE IN PRISON IF NOT FOR STRONG AND IMMEDIATE REACTION FROM SOUTH AFRICA, US, AND BRITISH SOURCES. FOR THE ABOVE, HE EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO UNNAMED SUPPORTERS.

2. QOBOZA SAYS SECURITY POLICE VISITED HIS HOME AT 3:20 A.M. AND KEPT HIM UNDER QUESTIONING FOR 8 HOURS AT SOWETO POLICE STATION. HE IS CONVINCED DECISION TO PICK HIM UP WAS MADE AT LOCAL LEVEL AS QUESTIONING WAS DISORGANIZED AND ILL PLANNED. HE FEELS THAT WHEN HIGHER-UPS IN PRETORIA LEARNED OF HIS ARREST, THEY ORDERED HIS RELEASE BECAUSE OF DAMAGING IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE. PURPOSE OF QUESTIONING OSTENSIBLY WAS TO LEARN WHAT STUDENTS ARE UP TO IN SOWETO BUT QOBOZA WAS APPALLED AT THE CLUMSY AND ILL-INFORMED NATURE OF INTERROGATION.

3. PURPOSE OF EARLY MORNING PICK-UP WAS OBVIOUS ATTEMPT AT INTIMIDATION BUT QOBOZA SAYS SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM FELLOW

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EDITORS AND PARENT FIRM ARGUS PUBLISHING COMPANY HAVE

STRENGTHENED HIS RESOLVE TO CONTINUE INDEPENDENT STANCE.

4. COMMENT: CLUMSY AND DISORGANIZED NATURE OF
QOBOZA INTERROGATION LEADS US TO SUSPECT THAT IT WAS IN-
DEED A LOCAL OPERATION. LOCAL SECURITY POLICE HAVE
APPARENT "CARET BLANCHE" TO PICK UP ANYONE IN SOWETO BUT
IT WOULD APPEAR THEY OVERSTEPPED BOUNDS THIS TIME AND WERE
FORCED TO BEAT HASTY RETREAT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, THE PRESS, POLICE FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JOHANN02247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760461-1065
From: JOHANNESBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761242/aaaabjpo.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PERCY QOBOZA DISCUSSES INTERROGATION
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SF, (QOBOZA, PERCY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006